

Ann Yearsley, "To a Friend, on Valentine's Day"

**Description**

ANN YEARSLEY

"To a Friend, on Valentine's Day"

Thou blooming shepherds hail this day  
With love, the subject of each lay,  
Yet friendship tunes my artless song,  
To thee the grateful themes belong.

STREPHON, I never will repine, 5  
Thou'ldst not thy Valentine;  
O'er friendship's nobler heights we'll rove,  
Nor heed the soft'ning voice of love.

Strangers to Passion's tyrant reign, 10  
Careless, we'll range the happier plain,  
Where all those calmer joys we'll prove,  
Which wait sublime platonic love.

Yet I'll allow a future day, 15  
When friendship must at last give way;  
When thou, forgetful, shalt resign  
The maid who wrote this Valentine.

Think not, my friend, I dream of love ,  
That with some happier maid thou'lt prove;  
Friendship alone is my design 20  
In this officious Valentine.

Yet, when that victor God shall reign,  
And conquered Friendship quits the plain,  
This gentle whisperer captive take,  
'Twill all thy former kindness wake.

But if its pleadings you deny, 25  
And faint would have remembrance die,  
Then to devouring flames consign  
My too ill-fated Valentine.

**NOTES:**

**1** *blooming* â??In the bloom of health and beauty, in the prime of youthâ?• (OED).

**5** *STREPHON* A typical male name used in pastoral poetry (*Oxford Reference*); *repine* â??To feel or express discontent or dissatisfaction; to grumble, complainâ?• (OED).

**12** *sublime* â?? perfect, consummate; supremeâ?• (OED); *platonic* â?? Of love, affection, or friendship: intimate and affectionate but not sexual; spiritual rather than physicalâ?• (OED).

**26** *fain* â??Gladly, willingly, with pleasureâ?• (OED).

**Source:** *Poems on Several Occasions* (London, 1786), p. 21. [Google Books]

*Edited by Katherine Lowden*